

REMARKS

I. Discussion of the Rejection under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103(a) over Depui *et al.* in view of Khankari *et al.*

Claims 20, 21, 23-26 and 28, 29, 31 and 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Depui *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,365,184) in view of Khankari *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,024,981). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that the '981 reference is not proper art in view of Applicants' priority date of July 28, 1998 based upon the related Japanese patent application. Priority was perfected on July 9, 2002 when the certified copy of the English translation of the priority document was submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the cited '981 reference in light of Applicants' priority, previously perfected by submission of a translation.

Therefore Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103(a) rejection over Depui *et al.* in view of Khankari *et al.*

II. Discussion of the Rejection under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103(a) over Depui *et al.* in view of Khankari *et al.* and Makino *et al.*

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Therefore Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103(a) rejection over Depui *et al.*, in view of Khankari *et al.* and Makino *et al.*

III. Discussion of the Additionally Cited Art

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for bringing the additionally cited art of Shimizu *et al.* and Phillips to their attention. Applicants have carefully reviewed the additionally cited references and do not believe that they detract from the patentability of the subject invention. In fact, the Shimizu *et al.* reference is already of record and was signed off on by the Examiner on December 28, 2004.

IV. Conclusion

Reconsideration of the aspects of the invention as set forth in the pending claims and allowance is requested.

Should the Examiner believe that a conference with Applicants' attorney would advance prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants' attorney at (847) 383-3391.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 13, 2006

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